

Message Text

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21

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 OMB-01 /069 W

----- 063764

R 050416Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1319

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY SUVA

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L WELLINGTON 1667

DEPARTMENT FOR EA/ANP FOR AMBASSADOR SELDEN

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PDIP, PFOR, EAID, AS, TN, UR, MILI

SUBJ: SOVIET ACTIVITIES IN TONGA

REF: (A) STATE 107090 (NOTAL), (B) CANBERRA 3154 (NOTAL)

1. WEST GERMAN AMBASSADOR TO NEW ZEALAND SOLTSMANN HAS INFORMED EMBASSY OF THE RECEIPT OF ANOTHER REPORT FROM THE HONORARY GERMAN CONSUL IN NUKU ALOFA. REPORT CONTAINS A PLEA FROM GOVERNMENT OF TONGA FOR GERMAN HELP TO TONGAN SHIPPING COMPANY WHICH WAS SAID TO BE BANKRUPT. COMPANY EMPLOYS 400 MEN, RUNS ONE DEEP WATER SHIP TO AUSTRALIA AND SEVERAL SMALLER INTER-ISLAND TRAMPS. WITHOUT EXPEDITIOUS HELP 400 MEN WILL LOSE JOBS.

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2. SOLTSMANN SAID HE IS INCLINED TO RECOMMEND TO BONN

THAT HELP TO SHIPPING COMPANY BE GIVEN. BUT SOLTSMANN WAS CONCERNED WITH WIDER IMPLICATIONS OF SITUATION IN TONGA. IN VIEW TONGAN BACKWARDNESS AND CRITICAL NEED FOR DEVELOPMENT FUNDS, A JOINT EFFORT WAS NEEDED. COUNTRIES SUGGESTED BY SOLTSMANN AS DONORS WERE UNITED STATES, WEST GERMANY, SWITZERLAND, AND AUSTRALIA. EACH COUNTRY COULD HELP IN ITS OWN WAY ON A PARTICULAR PROJECT OR PROJECTS AND NO COUNTRY WOULD APPEAR TO BE TOO FAR OUT IN FRONT. SOLTSMANN BELIEVED THIS KIND OF ARRANGEMENT WOULD BE ONE MOST AGREEABLE TO KING OF TONGA, WHOM SOLTSMANN SEES AS NOT WITHOUT CONSIDERABLE SOPHISTICATION IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS. ON BASIS OF CONVERSATIONS WITH THE KING, SOLTSMANN PARTICULARLY BELIEVES TONGAN MONARCH IS STRONG ANTI-COMMUNIST.

3. SOLTSMANN SAID THAT HE HAD ALSO DISCUSSED WITH UNITED KINGDOM HIGH COMMISSIONER IN WELLINGTON, HAROLD SMEDLEY, POSSIBLE SOVIET NAVAL INTEREST IN TONGA AND ASKED SMEDLEY IF HE WOULD BE WILLING TO GET AN ASSESSMENT FROM U.K. RESIDENT HIGH COMMISSIONER IN NUKU ALOFA. SMEDLEY HAS AGREED TO DO SO AND WILL BE BACK IN TOUCH WITH SOLTSMANN.

4. COMMENT: SOLTSMANN SEEMS TO BE SUGGESTING THAT UNITED STATES TAKE THE LEAD IN SEEING WHAT CAN BE DONE TO HELP TONGA. HE REPRESENTED WEST GERMANY AS READY TO GO AHEAD, BUT CLEARLY WAS SAYING THAT BONN WOULD FEEL MORE COMFORTABLE AS PART OF A GROUP OF COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY INCLUDING THE UNITED STATES, THAT WOULD HELP.

5. WE SHALL BE PICKING UP WHATEVER ELSE WE CAN HERE FROM THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND ELSEWHERE ABOUT THE EXTENT OF TONGAN NEED AND THE STRENGTH OF SOVIET NAVAL AMBITIONS IN TONGA. MEANWHILE, DEPARTMENT MAY WISH TO CONSIDER EXPLORING WITH GOVERNMENTS OF COUNTRIES MENTIONED ABOVE WHAT THEY MIGHT BE PREPARED TO DO. WE SEEM CERTAINLY TO BE MOVING INTO A NEW SITUATION WHERE PEOPLES REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND SOVIET UNION ARE STRENGTHENING THEIR DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH ISLAND NATIONS OF TONGA, FIJI AND WESTERN SAMOA. IF THIS MEANS THAT CHINESE-SOVIET RIVALRY IS MOVING INTO THIS PART OF THE PACIFIC, CONFIDENTIAL

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FURTHER OFFERS OF ASSISTANCE FROM TWO COMMUNIST GIANTS ARE LIKELY TO BE MADE TO ISLAND NATIONS. THIS WILL ELICIT REQUESTS FOR WESTERN HELP AND PERHAPS IT IS ALREADY EARLY ENOUGH TO BE WEIGHING OUR COURSE OF ACTION. KILLGORE

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